

THURSDAY MARCH 11, 2021

thecourier.com.au

NEWS
**LOCATION
PENDING**



P4

NEWS
**PREMIUM
EXPERIENCE**



P9

SPORT
**BOWLERS OF
THE DECADE**



P22

The Courier

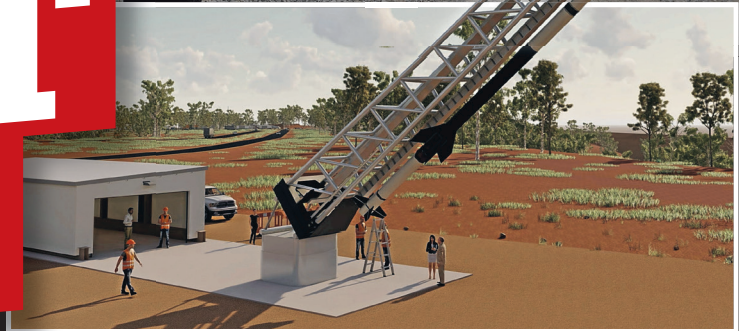
EST 1867

\$1.70
INC GST

PROUD: Jeremy White and Mike Corbett are eager to see the space project (inset) take shape.
Pictures: Lachlan Bence/Supplied



LIFT OFF



Ballarat innovation links into spaceport project with NASA

BY JACKSON RUSSELL

ONE Ballarat business is playing a pivotal role in the construction of Australia's first spaceport in East Arnhem, Northern Territory.

The project is being constructed by Equatorial Launch Australia and a contract has already been signed with NASA for its rockets and

payloads to be launched at the site upon its completion.

Commercial space enterprises such as SpaceX are also potential users of the spaceport.

The project could bring a much-needed injection of jobs and investment to the local economy which suffered through a tumultuous 2020 due to the ongoing

COVID-19 pandemic.

Delacombe business DW Controls has been contracted to design and construct the mains switchboard and install the site's power plant, a series of large diesel generators made by PR Power.

DW Controls will also build an exact replica of the site's launch pad and run proof of concept testing be-

fore everything is shipped to the future spaceport, located near Nhulunbuy on the Northern Territory's north-east coast, where they will reconstruct the power plant.

They will also be able to monitor and control the power plant from its Ballarat site once the spaceport is operational.

After 18 months of plan-

ning and pandemic-related delays, the first phase of the project got underway on Wednesday morning as the four main diesel generators were delivered to Ballarat.

Everything on the site will have to be constructed from scratch as it has no existing power or communications infrastructure.

DW Controls general

manager Jeremy White said setting up a replica launch pad would allow the power plant to be deconstructed, shipped and reconstructed like a Meccano set.

"We've got a lot of items that have got to come in here, get positioned and then we've got to do all the comms between them," he said.

Continued page 4



Western Australia
t. (08) 6117 9777
20 Niche Parade
Wangara WA 6085

Queensland
t. (07) 5613 2999
41 Production Ave
Molendinar QLD 4214

Victoria
t. (03) 9798 0505
23 Commercial Drive
Lynbrook VIC 3975

Australia Wide
1300 399 499

NEWS

Ballarat's role in space project

From page 1

"There's a lot of testing that's got to go in because seeing as it's going to such a remote location. That's one of the key reasons why we've chosen to do a one-for-one scale, so if we need any extra equipment or another part, we're close by, we're not waiting for three or four weeks up on site for a part to come from Melbourne or Sydney or Adelaide."

Mr White said there was the potential for job creation throughout the project's development.

"Because it's been in the making over 18 months, the family at home has been asking if the project is going to happen... but to go home and say it's actually happening, we are going to press forward with this, is pretty exciting," he said.

"The people that I've told, because now we can actually mention the project, people are saying 'what, we're building a spaceport in Australia?',"



LAUNCH: DW Controls general manager Jeremy White, PR Power state manager Mike Corbett, CJ Milne project manager Che Rogers and ELA manager power, communications and IT Marco Pavincich at the generator delivery on Wednesday. **Picture:** Lachlan Bence.

because not a lot of people know that and there's other things that are going to come out in the future.

"It's pretty interesting what's gonna happen in the next five or six years, it is going to be unbelievable."

ELA manager power, com-

munications and IT Marco Pavincich said the site's close proximity to the equator, just 12 degrees south, made it an optimal launch location.

"This is a massive milestone because all the power for the whole site will come from these four generators,"

he said. "They'll be completely assembled here in Ballarat, together with all the supporting transformers, the diesel fuel tanks, and the switchboard with communications... will be inside a 40-foot container."

Project manager for the

project's head electrical contractor Che Rogers said the spaceport would be one of just three in the southern hemisphere and would be aimed at commercial projects. "This spaceport is more aimed at the commercial, low-orbit sort of smaller

rockets and non-manned satellites, but it has the capacity to grow," he said. "It will all be locally fabricated, local resources. Most of the big equipment is coming out of Victoria and most of the hands will be local labour."

— JACKSON RUSSELL



Western Australia
t. (08) 6117 9777
20 Niche Parade
Wangara WA 6065

Queensland
t. (07) 5613 2999
41 Production Ave
Molendinar QLD 4214

Victoria
t. (03) 9798 0505
23 Commercial Drive
Lynbrook VIC 3975

Australia Wide
1300 399 499

14 NEWS heraldsun.com.au

Arnhem, we have liftoff

NASA to support launch site

MARK DUNN

COUNTDOWN to liftoff — the first concrete steps to Australian space missions are under way with NASA funding to help build a launch pad in Arnhem Land.

The launch site in the Northern Territory will, from next year, become the first non-government facility in the world to launch NASA rockets, for science and research, and is being promoted as a major economic driver for the nation's post-COVID recovery.

With the global commercial space sector estimated to be about \$1 trillion by 2040, Equatorial Launch Australia chief executive Carley Scott said the new ELA launch site is expected to generate around \$750m in mission revenue.

The Arnhem Space Centre site, near the East Arnhem township of Nhulunbuy on the land of the Yolngu people, is just 12 degrees south of the equator, giving it unique efficiencies for suborbital and or-



ELA chief executive Carley Scott, Djawa Yunupingu, from the Gumatj Corporation, and Black Sky Aerospace chief Blake Nikolic. Right: an artist's impression of the launch site (top).



bital launches. ELA has partnered with NASA, which has provided an initial \$1m to start construction of the specialised 25x5m launch pads, capable of launching the largest NASA "sounding" rockets, research vehicles up to 19m long and carrying payloads up to 300kg.

"The Arnhem Space Centre

is positioned to develop into a significant strategic asset and potentially among the nation's critical infrastructure list," Ms Scott said.

"Importantly, the site acts as a hub, attracting the world's best scientists, engineers, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) professionals who look to work

with ELA and Australian teams to access space and share cutting-edge innovation and research projects."

With the establishment of the Australian Space Agency, the sector hopes to generate 20,000 new jobs in Australia by 2030.

"Space is delivering the diversification opportunities our

nation so desperately needed, well before the devastating economic impacts of COVID-19," Ms Scott said.

"With the NASA contract in hand, and another rocket launch customer soon to be announced by ELA, the opportunities of space and launch are proving to be very real, and exceptionally well timed for a

nation looking desperately for new economic solutions."

Further planning and regulatory assessments are being conducted with ASA.

Ms Scott said the Yolngu community had been working with ELA on site preparatory works and local benefits would continue.

mark.dunn@news.com.au



Western Australia
t. (08) 6117 9777
20 Niche Parade
Wangara WA 6065

Queensland
t. (07) 5613 2999
41 Production Ave
Molendinar QLD 4214

Victoria
t. (03) 9798 0505
23 Commercial Drive
Lynbrook VIC 3975

Australia Wide
1300 399 499